

**DISTRICT OF  
COLUMBIA  
MUNICIPAL  
REGULATIONS  
for  
MASSAGE  
THERAPY**

**CHAPTER 75 MASSAGE THERAPY**

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**7500 GENERAL PROVISIONS**

- 7500.1 This Chapter shall apply to applicants for and holders of a license to practice massage therapy.
- 7500.2 Chapters 40 (Health Occupations: General Rules) and 41 (Health Occupations: Administrative Procedures) of this title shall supplement this chapter.

**7501 TERM OF LICENSE**

- 7501.1 Subject to § 7501.2, a license issued pursuant to this chapter shall expire at 12:00 midnight of January 31<sup>st</sup> of each odd-numbered year.
- 7501.2 If the Director changes the renewal system pursuant to § 4006.3 of Chapter 40 of this title, a license issued pursuant to this chapter shall expire at 12:00 midnight of the last day of the month of the birthdate of the holder of the license, or other date established by the Director.

**7502 EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

- 7502.1 Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, an applicant shall furnish proof satisfactory to the Board that the applicant has successfully completed an educational program in the practice of massage therapy at an institution or institutions licensed by the District of Columbia Educational Licensing Commission or, upon discretion of the Board, by the educational licensing authority of another state, at the time the applicant graduated. In addition, said institution(s) shall be approved or accredited by the Commission on Massage

Therapy Accreditation/Approval (COMTAA) or shall have equivalent standards as determined by the Board; or said institution shall be accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Education and Training, the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology or another accreditation agency approved by the United States Department of Education or a regional body for post secondary education, at the time the applicant graduated, in accordance with § 504(d-1) of the Act, D.C. Official Code § 3-1205.04(d)(1).

- 7502.2 Applicants for a license to practice massage therapy shall establish, to the satisfaction of the Board of Massage Therapy, that he or she has successfully completed a minimum of 500 hours of training in massage therapy.
- 7502.3 Of the minimum 500 hours of in-class training required, a minimum of 100 hours shall consist of Anatomy, Physiology, and Kinesiology. The remaining 400 hours must include a majority of hours in massage therapy theory and practice, as well as discretionary related course work, including but not limited to professional ethics, business practices, health and hygiene, contraindications of massage, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and first aid.
- 7502.4 The five hundred (500) hours of in-class training must be accumulated in programs not less than six (6) months total duration.
- 7502.5 An applicant may attend more than one (1) training institution, provided that they graduate from a school requiring a minimum of five hundred (500) in-class hours.
- 7502.6 Credits earned from a college or university shall be converted by the federal government conversion rate, which grants thirty-seven (37) clock hours for each one (1) credit hour. One (1) classroom hour shall be defined as no less than fifty (50) minutes of any one (1) clock hour.
- 7502.7 Correspondence courses shall not be recognized by the Board.
- 7502.8 An applicant shall submit the following as part of a completed application form:
- (a) An official certified transcript of the applicant's successful completion of the required in-class training;
  - (b) A certificate of graduation from an approved school; and
  - (c) Certification, pursuant to § 7504.2, of the applicant's passing the required approved examination.
- 7502.9 The Board may issue a list of approved schools and training programs.

**7503            APPLICANTS EDUCATED IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES**

- 7503.1            The Board may grant a license to practice massage therapy to an applicant who completed an education program in a foreign country if the applicant meets the following requirements:
- (a) Meets all requirements of this chapter except for § 7502.1; and
  - (b) Demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Board that the applicant's education and training are substantially equivalent to the requirements of this subtitle and the Act in ensuring that the applicant is qualified to practice massage therapy by arranging for an evaluation of the applicant's education and practical training.
- 7503.2            To qualify for a license under this section, an applicant shall have successfully completed a training program that meets the standards for accreditation of massage therapy programs equivalent to those set forth in § 7502.1.
- 7503.3            The Board may interview an applicant under this section to determine whether the applicant's education and/or training meets the requirements of the Act and this chapter.
- 7503.4            If a document required by this subtitle is in a language other than English, an applicant shall arrange for its translation into English by a translation service acceptable to the Board and shall submit a translation signed by the translator attesting to its accuracy.

**7504            NATIONAL EXAMINATION**

- 7504.1            To qualify for a license by examination, an applicant shall receive a passing score on the National Certification Examination for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCETMB) or another examination which is certified by the National Commission of Certifying Agencies (NCCA) and approved at the discretion of the Board.
- 7504.2            An applicant shall submit, with a completed application to the Board, the applicant's examination results, certified by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB) or another testing service approved by the Board pursuant to § 7504.1.
- 7504.3            The Board shall only consider an application after the applicant has passed the required examination.

**7505            [RESERVED]**

**7506 CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

- 7506.1 Subject to § 7506.2, this section shall apply to renewals, reactivation, or reinstatement of a license for a term expiring January 31, 1999, and for subsequent terms.
- 7506.2 This section shall not apply to applicants for an initial license by examination, reciprocity, or endorsement, nor does it apply to applicants for the first renewal of a license granted by examination.
- 7506.3 A continuing education credit shall be valid only if it is part of a program or activity approved by the Board in accordance with § 7507.
- 7506.4 An applicant for renewal of a license shall submit proof pursuant to § 7506.7 of having completed twelve (12) hours of approved continuing education credit during the two (2) year period preceding the date the license expires. Two (2) of the twelve (12) hours shall be in professional ethics. Three (3) of the twelve (12) hours shall be in course work consisting of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid.
- 7506.5 To qualify for a license, a person in inactive status within the meaning of D.C. Official Code § 3-1205.11, who submits an application to reactivate a license shall submit proof pursuant to § 7506.7 of having completed six (6) hours of approved continuing education credit for each license year after January 31, 1999, that the applicant was in inactive status.
- 7506.6 To qualify for reinstatement of a license to practice massage therapy, an applicant shall submit proof pursuant to § 7506.7 of having completed continuing education credits which takes the following:
- (a) Six (6) hours of credit in an approved program for each year the license has expired up to 30 total hours of credit; and
  - (b) Twelve (12) hours of credit which shall include (2) hours in professional ethics and three (3) hours in CPR and first aid training for the two (2) years preceding the reinstatement application.
- 7506.7 An applicant under this section shall prove completion of required continuing education credits by submitting with the application the following information with respect to each program:

- (a) The name and address of the sponsor of the program;
- (b) The name of the program, its location, a description of the subject matter covered, and the names of the instructors;
- (c) The dates on which the applicant attended the program;
- (d) The hours of credit claimed; and
- (e) Verification by the sponsor of completion, by signature or stamp.

- 7506.8 An applicant for renewal of a license who fails to submit proof of having completed continuing education requirements by the date the license expires may renew the license up to sixty (60) days after expiration by submitting proof pursuant to § 7506.7 and by paying the required additional late fee.
- 7506.9 Upon submitting proof and paying the late fee, the applicant shall be deemed to have possessed a valid license during the period between the expiration of the license and the submission of the required documentation and payment of the late fee.
- 7506.10 If an applicant for renewal of a license fails to submit proof of completion of continuing education requirements or pay the late fee within sixty (60) days after the expiration of applicant's license, the license shall be considered to have lapsed on the date of expiration.
- 7506.11 The Board may, in its discretion, grant an extension of the sixty (60) day period to renew after expiration if the applicant's failure to submit proof of completion was for good cause. For purposes of this section, "good cause" includes the following:
- (a) Serious and protracted illness of the applicant;
  - (b) The death or serious and protracted illness of a member of the applicant's immediate family.
- 7507 APPROVED CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES**
- 7507.1 The Board may, in its discretion, approve continuing education programs and activities that contribute to the growth of an applicant in professional competence in the practice of massage therapy and which meet the other requirements of this section.

- 7507.2 The Board may approve the following types of continuing education programs if the program meets the requirements of § 7507.3:
- (a) An undergraduate or graduate course given at an accredited college or university;
  - (b) A seminar or workshop;
  - (c) An educational program given at a conference; and
  - (d) In-service training.
- 7507.3 To qualify for approval by the Board, a continuing education program shall do the following:
- (a) Be current in its subject matter;
  - (b) Be developed and taught by qualified individuals; and
  - (c) Meet one of the following requirements:
    - (1) Be administered or approved by a recognized national, state, or local massage therapy organization, health care organization, accredited health care facility, or an accredited college or university; or
    - (2) Be submitted by the program sponsors to the Board for review no less than sixty (60) days prior to the date of the presentation and be approved by the Board.
- 7507.4 The Board may issue and update a list of approved continuing education programs.
- 7507.5 An applicant shall have the burden of verifying whether a program is approved by the Board pursuant to this section prior to attending the program.
- 7507.6 The Board may approve the following continuing education activities by an applicant:
- (a) Serving as an instructor or speaker at a conference, seminar, workshop, or in-service training;
  - (b) Publication of an article in a professional journal or publication of a book or a chapter in a book or publication of a book review in a professional journal or bulletin related to massage therapy;
  - (c) Serving as a clinical instructor for students of massage therapy; or

(d) Participating in research as a principal investigator or research assistant.

## **7508 CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS**

- 7508.1 The Board may grant continuing education credit for whole hours only, with a minimum of fifty (50) minutes constituting one (1) credit hour.
- 7508.2 For approved undergraduate or graduate courses that are taken for educational credit, each semester credit constitutes thirty-seven (37) hours of continuing education credit, and each quarter credit constitutes thirty (30) hours of continuing education credit.
- 7508.3 For approved undergraduate or graduate courses that are audited, two (2) hours of continuing education credit shall be granted.
- 7508.4 The Board may grant a maximum of six (6) continuing education credits per year to an applicant who attends in-service education programs.
- 7508.5 The Board may grant to an applicant who serves as an instructor or speaker at an acceptable program for both preparation and presentation time, subject to the restrictions in § 7508.6 through § 7508.8.
- 7508.6 The maximum amount of credit that may be granted for preparation time is twice the amount of the associated presentation time.
- 7508.7 If an applicant has previously received credit in connection with a particular presentation, the Board shall not grant credit for a subsequent presentation unless it involves either a different subject or substantial additional research concerning the same subject.
- 7508.8 The presentation shall have been completed during the period for which credit is claimed.
- 7508.9 The Board may grant an applicant who is an author or sole editor of a published book eight (8) hours of continuing education credit, if the book has been published or accepted for publication during the period for which credit is claimed and the applicant submits proof of this fact in the application.
- 7508.10 The Board may grant an applicant who is the sole author or co-author of a published original paper four (4) hours of continuing education credit, subject to the same restrictions set forth for books in § 7508.9.

- 7508.11 The Board may grant an applicant who is sole author of a published book review, review paper, or abstract, two (2) hours of continuing education credit, subject to the same restrictions set forth for books in § 7508.9.

**7509 WAIVER OF EXAMINATION AND EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

- 7509.1 The Board of Massage Therapy shall waive the educational and examination requirements for any applicant for licensure as a massage therapist who can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Board, that he or she has been performing the functions of a massage therapists, as defined in the Act, on a full-time or substantially full-time basis continually at least twelve (12) months immediately preceding the effective date of the Act, and is qualified to do so on the basis of pertinent education, training, experience, and demonstrated current competence, provided that the application for the license is made within twenty-four (24) months of the effective date of this chapter.
- 7509.2 An applicant who requests that the Board waive examination and educational requirements under § 730 of the Act, D.C. Official Code § 3-1207.31, shall do the following:
- (a) Submit with the application the following:
- (1) A statement by the applicant detailing the nature, length, and locations of the applicant's practice, including the number of hours per week and the number of clients seen. Applicant must list full work history, accounting for all gaps in chronology;
  - (2) A statement by the applicant detailing the nature, length, and locations of education, training or experience;
  - (3) An affidavit from at least one (1) client for each quarter period between March 14, 1994 and March 14, 1995 attesting that the applicant has provided massage therapy for compensation during that quarter period. Each affidavit shall include the client's name, address, and phone number;
  - (4) Three (3) letters of reference from state-licensed/certified health care professionals of massage therapy, acupuncture, chiropractic, nurse practitioner, physical therapy, medicine, or physician assistants with whom the applicant has worked professionally or shared patient referrals, attesting to the competence, professional integrity, and moral and ethical conduct of the applicant as defined by these rules, between March 14, 1994 and March 14, 1995.
  - (5) A criminal records check performed within ninety (90) days of the date of the application for licensure.

(b) Demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Board that the applicant has performed the practice and completed the education and training as set forth in the applicant's statement by submitting the following:

- (1) Copies of the applicant's appointment book(s) or other materials evidencing massage therapy activity between March 14, 1994 and March 14, 1995; and
- (2) Certified copies of certificates and transcripts from any educational or training programs.

7509.3 The Board of Massage Therapy shall waive the examination requirement for any applicant who meets the educational requirements for licensure as a massage therapist, has practiced as a Massage Therapist, whether full-time or not, within a three (3) year period immediately preceding the effective date of the Act, and is qualified to do so on the basis of pertinent experience and demonstrated current competence, provided that the application for license is made within twenty-four (24) months of the effective date of this chapter.

7509.4 An applicant who requests that the Board waive examination requirements under § 731 of the Act, D.C. Official Code § 3-1207.32, shall do the following:

(a) Submit with the application the following:

- (1) A statement by the applicant detailing the nature, length, and locations of the applicant's practice, including the number of hours per week and the number of clients seen. Applicant must list full work history, accounting for all gaps in chronology;
- (2) A statement by the applicant detailing the nature, length, and locations of the education, training and experience;
- (3) An affidavit from at least one (1) client for each year between March 14, 1992 and March 14, 1995, attesting that the applicant has provided massage therapy for compensation during that year. Each affidavit shall include the client's name, address, and phone number;
- (4) Three (3) letters of reference from state-licensed/certified health care professionals of massage therapy, acupuncture, chiropractic, nurse practitioner, physical therapy, medicine, or physician's assistant, with whom the applicant has worked professionally or shared patient referrals, attesting to the competence, professional integrity, and moral and ethical conduct of the applicant as defined by these rules between March 14, 1992 and March 14, 1995; and

(5) A criminal records check performed within 90 days of the date of the application for licensure.

(b) Demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Board that the applicant has performed the practice and completed the education and training as set forth in the applicant's statement by submitting the following:

(1) Copies of the applicant's appointment book(s) or other materials evidencing massage therapy activities between March 14, 1992 and March 14, 1995; and

(2) Certified copies of certificates and transcripts from any educational or training programs.

**7510 [RESERVED]**

**7511 PRACTICE OF MASSAGE THERAPY BY STUDENTS OR APPLICANTS**

7511.1 This section shall apply to the following:

(a) Students enrolled in schools or colleges recognized by the Board pursuant to § 7502.1 as candidates for a certificate or degree in massage therapy; and

(b) Applicants for a license whose first application for a license in the District of Columbia is pending.

7511.2 A student or applicant may perform actions which require a license as a massage therapist only in accordance with the Act and this section.

7511.3 Students and applicants shall adhere to the following:

(a) A student shall practice massage therapy only under the supervision of a licensed massage therapist; and

(b) An applicant may practice massage therapy prior to licensure for 90 days under the supervision of a licensed massage therapist pursuant to § 7511.6.

7511.4 The practice of massage therapy by a student or applicant must be subject to the written consent and protocols of the supervisor or school.

7511.5 A student or applicant shall identify himself or herself as a student or applicant at all times when performing actions of a massage therapist.

- 7511.6 A massage therapist supervising a student or an applicant shall be fully responsible for massage therapy performed according to the written protocols of the school or supervisor by the student or applicant during the time of the supervision and is subject to disciplinary action for any violation of the Act or this chapter by the person supervised.
- 7511.7 A student may not be paid or receive compensation of any nature, directly or indirectly, from a client.
- 7511.8 Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to bar a school from charging fees for its students' massage therapy services to the public.
- 7511.9 A student or applicant shall be subject to all of the applicable provisions of the Act and this chapter.
- 7511.10 In accordance with Chapter 41 of this title, the Board may deny an application for a license by, or take other disciplinary action against a student or applicant who is found to have violated the Act or this chapter.
- 7511.11 If the Board finds that a student or applicant has violated the Act or this chapter, the Board may, in addition to any other disciplinary actions permitted by the Act, revoke, suspend, or restrict the privilege of the student or applicant to practice.

**7512 [RESERVED]**

**7513 ADVERTISEMENT**

- 7513.1 A massage therapist licensed under the provisions of this chapter shall include the number of his or her license in any advertisement of massage services appearing in any newspaper, airwave transmission, telephone directory or other advertising medium.

**7514 STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

- 7514.1 A licensed massage therapists shall do the following:
- (a) Perform only those services for which the massage therapist is qualified and shall not represent his or her skills, training, scope of practice, certifications, professional affiliations, and other qualifications in a manner which is false or misleading;
  - (b) Acknowledge the inherent worth and individuality of each person and, therefore, do not unjustly discriminate against clients or colleagues and work

to eliminate prejudices in the profession;

- (c) Abide by all laws governing health occupations;
- (d) Protect the client's right to privacy by not divulging confidential information without consent of the client or guardian unless required by law or unless, in the judgment of the massage therapist, the information is needed to protect the client or the community or is otherwise required by statute;
- (e) Conduct business and professional activities with honesty and integrity and project a professional image in all aspects of his or her practice;
- (f) Respect the integrity of each person and therefore, shall not engage in any sexual activity with clients or individuals who have been clients within the previous twelve months, nor engage in any activities with the intent of sexually arousing clients;
- (g) Provide information about fees upon request by the client; and
- (h) Promptly report any information of illegal, unethical or unsafe practice of massage therapy to the Board.

## **7599            DEFINITIONS**

7599.1            As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings ascribed:

**Applicant** – means a person applying for a license to practice massage therapy under this chapter.

**Approved School** – means any institution or training program which meets the requirements of § 7502.1.

**Board** – means the Board of Massage Therapy, established by § 215 of the Act, D.C. Official Code § 3-1202.15.

**Full time** – means working at least 37.5 hours per week. Client contact while performing massage therapy must comprise at least sixteen (16) of those 37.5 hours.

**Massage Techniques** – means any touching or pressure with the intent of providing healing or therapeutic benefits through soft tissue manipulation. Massage techniques do not include the incidental use of soft tissue manipulation while primarily engaging in another technique or modality in which a practitioner is qualified. Incidental use refers to soft tissue manipulation performed as a part of movement re-education, energy healing or other modality in which the soft tissue manipulation is not the central aim of the treatment, but is performed occasionally to facilitate the non-massage therapy practice. If the practice of soft tissue manipulation is limited

only to the feet and hands, it shall not be considered a massage technique. Massage techniques may be performed in any postural position including seated massage and techniques performed on clothed clients.

**Massage Therapist** – means a person licensed to practice massage therapy under the Act.

**Training** – means in-class instruction from an approved institution pursuant to § 7502.1. Apprenticeships, internships, correspondence courses or any other out-of-class experience are not considered training, but are considered experience.

**Sexual Activity** – means any direct or indirect physical contact or connection by any person, or between persons, which is intended to erotically stimulate either or both persons or which is likely to cause such stimulation. As used herein, sexual activity can involve the use of any device or object and is not dependent on whether penetration, orgasm, or ejaculation occurs.

**Substantially full time** – means working at least twenty-eight (28) hours per week. Client contact while performing massage therapy must comprise at least twelve (12) of those 28 hours.

**Supervision** – means oversight by a massage therapist licensed in the District of Columbia who is available on the premises or by vocal communication either directly or by a communications device and within one hour of travel time of the supervisee.

7599.2            The definitions of § 7099 of Chapter 40 of this title are incorporated by reference into and are applicable to this title.